

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 071544Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3378
AMCONSUL GENOA

UNCLAS ROME 10556

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EGEN, EMIN, ENRG, IT
SUBJ: --

1. THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL DAILY 24 ORE REPORTED ON JUNE 6 THAT DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR SUPPLIES OF ITALSIDER (IRI GROUP) DR. BUFFA, IN A MEETING AT GENOA WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AUSTRALIAN UTAH DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, DECLARED THAT ITALSIDER WILL IMPORT FROM AUSTRALIA ABOUT 150 MILLION TONS OF COKING COAL IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS. DR. BUFFA ALSO STATED THAT THE SUPPLY SOURCES DIVERSIFICATION POLICY ADOPTED BY ITALSIDER AND FINSIDER, INCLUDING THROUGH DIRECT PARTNERSHIP IN FOREIGN MINING PROJECTS, IS DESIGNED TO SECURE REGULAR SUPPLIES OF RAW MATERIALS AND MODERATE THEIR COST INCREASES OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS. ITALSIDER'S COAL IMPORTS IN 1977 ARE REPORTED AS 8.5 MILLION TONS OF WHICH 1.2 MILLION CAME FROM AUSTRALIA.

2. ACCORDING TO CENTRAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE DATA, ITALIAN IMPORTS OF COAL (ALL TYPES) FROM AUSTRALIA AMOUNTED TO ONLY ABOUT 1 MILLION TONS PER YEAR IN 1975, 1976 AND DURING THE FIRST 10 MONTHS OF 1977 (OR ONLY ABOUT 9 PERCENT OF TOTAL DOMESTIC COAL IMPORTS). IMPORTS OF COAL FROM THE UNITED STATES WERE 4 MILLION TONS IN 1975 (32 PERCENT OF TOTAL COAL IMPORTS);
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3.5 MILLION TONS IN 1976 (34 PERCENT) AND 3.2 MILLION TONS IN JAN-OCT 1977 (34 O/O). ITALIAN IMPORTS OF US COAL CONSIST ALMOST ENTIRELY OF COKING COAL FOR IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY. OTHER FOREIGN SUPPLIERS OF COKING COAL ARE WEST GERMANY, POLAND AND USSR.

3. FOR GENOA: EMBASSY ATTEMPTING VERIFY INFO IN PARA

1 AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANY CONFIRMATION, COMMENT OR DETAILS
AMCONSUL GENOA CAN DEVELOP WITH ITALSIDER.

4. COMMENT: IF LONG TERM AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED OF REPORTED
SIZE, IT APPEARS AUSTRALIA WILL SUPPLANT US AS PRINCIPAL SUPPLIER
OF ITALIAN COKING COAL.HOLMES

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